A notable and maruailous epistle of the famous Doctor, Mathewe Gribalde, professor of the law, in the vniuersitie of Padua: concerning the terrible iudgement of god, vpon hym that for feare of men, denyeth Christ and the knowen veritie: wyth a Preface of Doctor Caluine. Translated out of Latin intoo English, by E. A.

Luke. xii.

But I saye vntoo you my frendes, be not afrayde of them that kyll the bodye, and afterwarde haue noo power to do any thing elsse.

Anno. 1550. in August.

Ames p. 470. W. 1461.

Jhon Caluin to the Christian reader.

How frowarde our mynd is in iudgynge thee woꝛkes of god, & howe croked a iudgemente we haue, it doth ryght well appere by thys, ꝓ whearas he sheweth so many examples one after an other in punishing the wickednes of man, yet manye do sleightlye passe ouer, oꝛ regarde the same, yea, some playnely scoꝛne thē, other suppose them to come by chaunce: and finally, all men sodainly foꝛget them. This vnthankeful nes, as it is not of it selfe to be boꝛne, soo bringeth it also this mischief with it, that we receyue not that fruycte of the iudgementes of god, that we should do, whyche is briefly noted of the prophet Esai, that is to say, that all thinhabiters of the earth, may learne righteousnes therby. By the which saiyng, he doth shewe vs that being stricken with feare, we ought Esai. xxvi.

to learne to drede god & lyue an holy life And because the prophetes would remedy this fall, there is no point of doctrine that they haue more to do withall, thē to fasten in oure remembraunce, suche plagues as god sendeth vpon the wycked & ongodly persones. And yet is there another mischief worse then thys, and that is stubbernes, that wee be not wyse, hauyng good monition and warnyng: and therfore of so many aduertisementes, as the prophetes in euery place beate into oure heades: yea, threate and thunder vpon vs, there commeth but small profyte and few there bene that are moued ther by. Because god woulde shake from vs this beastlye sluggishnes, he sheweth often tymes, such monstrous examples as maie constraine vs to feele, yea, thoughe we be asleepe.

Suche lyke example not longe ago, hath he declared in Fraunces Spera, fyrst in Italy, that is to saye, in the highest and most notable theatre of al Europa and Chrystendome, secondly, in that nation, which as it doth otherwise excell in fynenes of wit, so is it in this point without

al

all sence and fealing. For there in euery place doth all wickednes so licenciously reigne, that ỳ moste part either thinketh not, that god is the maker of the worlde or else knoweth not, that he shal come to be our iudge. And what marualy is it yt Antichrist, with his blast infect the Italians so nigh vnto hym, which hath poured out his deadly poyson, euen vpon ỳ vttermost costes of the earth. And therefore we se other nations bewitched with wycked superstytyons, but thys moste furyously and outragyously, contempneth GOD him selfe.

In dede there be in the countrye, some excellent and wise seruauntes of Christe And I doubt not but God hath many e shepe there (which being nowe scattered abrode, at length shall be gathered together). But yet in the commune lyfe of men (if a man would vieue euery estate and degree) there appeare the nothynge but horrible blindnes. Then forasmuche as they despyse god so rebelously, and wyth suche arrogancye, let them haue suche Scoolemaysters as they deserue. Surely Fraunceys Spera is worthy too be one of the chief. For whereas the vain

felowe puffed vp with ambityous bragging, wold prophanely despute & teach in the scole of Christ: at length comming abrode, coulde but a while enioy ỹ place of them, of whose sort he was not. Here by the Italians may learne that vse accustomably to dally with god, how earnest vengeaunce he wil take vpon those that scorne his maiestie. Nowe, whereas the Romissche Antichrist woulde by hys legate, so notably triumphe vpon Christ and his Gospel, in ỹ person of this wretched man, he hath enioyed suche successe as is mete for suche a pollicie and subtyl interprise. As long as Spera drewe hys breath in this worlde, in the mydes of his moste horrible paine & tormentes, he neuer ceased to crye that he was euerlastynglye condempned, because hee was brought wickedly to forsweare the Son of god, his onely healthe and saluatyon; partlye, through the hoorysh intisement & partly through the tirannicall threatenynges of the legate of Rome. The voices of the martires, whyche they moste cruellye murder, doo sounde emongeste theym: yea, and are hearde euen in heauen: But the pope and his garde thinke

them

theym not worthy their hearinge.

Let them delyte them selues therfore wythe the songe of thys Martyre of theyrs so longe, tyll they be brought into the same pageaunt of desperation thē selfe. I speake too the Romyshe pope, wyth hys bande of theues, and too the Italians by name, not because thys exaūple pertayneth to theym onelye: but because this sighte was set so nyghe before theyr eyen, by the maruaylous prouydence of God: forasmuche as they can not be wakened, but by suche tragicall motion.

In the meane season, all other natyons may knowe, that they are warned of the lorde. Let the Frenchmen bende and set their mynde on thys, that are, throughe their folie and lightnes auaunced aboue the cloudes, and are tomuch accustomed vnreuerently to skorne religion. Let the Germanes herken too thys, that haue bene heretofore to slacke and dul in perceyuynge the iudgementes of GOD, and nowe in theyr laste euylles, seeme vtterly to be voyd of all reason. Let the Englishe men alsoo, and other learne,

with what reuerence & carefulnes they ought to receiue Christ, now shining vp on theym. This wretched Spera (whether he was entiled by flatterye, or constrained by feare, to forswear goddes veritie, whiche he had confessed) as a notable example, ỹ the confession of godlye & hollsome doctrine (which we so slenderly regarde) is not a litle esteemed before ỹ iudgement seat of God. For as sone as he suffered him selfe to be led awaye too this false simulation and faininge (as the reprobate cease not to commit one mischiefe vpon an other) he fell into manye trappes, and entangled him selfe in manye snares of desperation, tyl at lengthe through his doting phantasies, striuyng in vaine (as beastes that are caughte in snares) he strangeled hym selfe. For asmuche then as thys example of goddes iudgement, is both worthy to be knowē of this our age, & to be remēbred of oure posteritie, I thought good to set abrode (as faithfully as became me) this history of him, compiled by a learned man & an eloquent: least partly through negligence, partly throughe sluggyshnes, and partly through the wickednes of men, it should be vtterly lost. For

For seynge that euery man perceyueth how vndiscretely such treatises were cõpiled, as haue bene heretofore set forthe I can not se what they can profyte the readers. The lorde Jesus establysh oure hertes in the ryght and pure faith of his gospel, and kepe oure tongues in the stedfaste confessyon of hym: that now syngyng with his Aungels, we may at lengthe with them enioythe ioy of the heauẽly kyngdom

Frõ Geneua,
the fyfthe of Decembre. 1549.

¶ An Epigram of the terryble example of one Frauncys Spera, an Italian, of whom this boke is compiled.

Excesse of riches, promotion worldlye.
Dignities, honor, and earthly pleasure
Wife, children, kinred, name, affinitie:
Accompt not these things as perfit treasur
Riches that faile not, but euer endure.
Descend from heauen, & neuer turne to yll
As these which oft both soule & body kyl.

Grace, truthe, clere conscience, what treasures they bene.
Let Spera be example to vs all
In these our daies ỹ lyk hath not ben sene
Of one that had from god, so greate a fall
Not able once hym selfe for grace to call.
Because ỹ wrech did set this worldly dros
Yn place aboue Christes Gospell, truthe, and crosse.

Sub his acrosticis latet authoris nomen.

A greate and

marualous example of the dy-
uyne iudgement, hath appered
in these our latter daies. We do i. Jhon. i.
witnes that which we haue herd w̄
our eares, & sene with our eies.

Francis Spe
ra, a lawyer
and famous
Aduocate,
borne in the
Castel of Ci
tadel: a man
about. l. yeres of age. hauyng a
wyfe and a leuen childr̄, worldly goodes, offices and promotions abundantly: after he had receiued the giftes of ỹ holy gost, through ỹ vnspeakeable grace of God, and had fullye knowen the Lorde Jesus Christe oure Sauiour,

He had a readye mind to vnderstande ỹ scriptures.

Sauiour, by the reuealynge of the hole Scripture, and beinge illuminate with the light of the holy gost, did confesse Christ onlye, and preached that wee had saluation geuen vs onely thorow Christe the sonne of God, & that by Christ onely we were iustified, and ought not too put affiaunce in any workes or merites of men: and yet notwythstanding, ought to do good workes, to thende we myght obeye god, and liue iustlye and godly. And finally, after he had attayned aboundante knowledge of the truth, through fayth, by the manifest testimonies of the holye Scrypture, tastynge in the mean season in his hearte, with much quietnes, pleasure, and cõfort, the gyftes of the holy gost, as faith, hope, charitie, mekenes,

gentle

gentlenes, and al maner of quiꝫ
etnes and tranquylytye of the
mynde, as hee that dyd poſſeſſe
Chriſte, and had the fruition ⁊
pleaſure of Chriſte, thys wꝛetꝫ
ched man (alas toto wꝛetched)
beyng, throughe the pꝛyckynge
foꝛwarde of his enemyes, ſumꝫ
moned tappeare at Uenys beꝫ
foꝛe the Legate of ỹ chief Bylꝫ
ſhop, and there beynge accuſed
of hereſie, greuouſly taunted ⁊
threatened, and finally conſtraiꝫ
ned through feare, either of coꝛꝫ
poꝛall deathe, oꝛ confiſcation of
hys goodes, vtteriye abiured
and denied the doctrine whych
he to foꝛe had pꝛeached, hauꝫig
commaundemente to retourne
into his countrei, and to recaꝫnt
his pꝛofeſſed doctrine, in ỹ pꝛace
of Citadel, wheare hee be foꝛe
had

had manifestly to a great sorte, declared and taught the same, and there to content the people and ministers of the churche, w̄ a manifest and solempne recantatiō. This wretched mā being dimysſed from the legate, & prepared to his iorneye, to execute ỹ commaundement of late geuen hym, concernyng his abiuryng began diuerſly to reaſō w̄ himſelf, whether he ſhuld retourne to Citadel, too confyrme hys recantatiō, eyther ſhuld forſake all hys goodes, and go to ſome other place to repente. As hee went in his iorney, the ſpirit of god continually came into hys mynde, and the pricke of conſcience prouokyng hym to repentaunce, and counſailing him alwaies not to go too abiure: but rather to forſake wife, chyldren and

The holie goſt inſpirynge. Cōſcience is a thouſand wytneſſes.

and ỳ whole worlde, yea, & to suf
fre present death, rather thẽ to
abiure and recant ỳ truth whi-
che he knew. The spirite sayde
Frauncis, beware least thou tõ
firme the recantation whiche ỹ
hertofore hast made, take hede
least thou confirme and seale ẅ
the signet of thy hert, that epy-
stle which thou haste sygned ẅ
thy symple hande: thou art fre
yet Fraunces, and hast escaped
out of the handes of mẽ, forsake
not ỳ truth, stand & fal no more
repent, & god wil haue mercy vp
on the: the frailnes of the flesh
hath moued the to this, beware
lest the wickednes of the spirite
come after. All these thynges
and manye other (as Fraunces
tolde vs) dyd the spiryte, and
hys conscyence contynually
beat in his head, ỳ which spirite
beyng at

The putter in remẽbrãce of oure inwarde thoughtes

Christian libertie.

Do not become ỳ seruantes of men.

The warning of ỳ spirite.

lengthe reiected, and his herte being hardened, he decreed wᵗ hym selfe, to preferre hys wyfe, childzen, offices, promotions & temporall goodes, before thee truthe whiche he knewe, and to confirme his abiuration which hee before had made, that hee might enioy his temporal goodes, in worldly quyetnes. And vpon this purpose, entringe in to the towne of Citadel, offred hym selfe too the Maier (whoo was aduertised of the same, before by letters) to be readye to satisfye the people and congregatiõ, and tabiure the doctryne whych he had preached before. And thys done, hee departed home, the same nyghte came to hym a prieste, brynginge hym a certeyne coppe of the recantation whiche he shoulde make the

next

next day before al the people, & the same nyghte, the wretched man toke no slepe, the next morning folowing being Sonday, when Masse was done, thys Frauncis rising vp, did abiure ỹ doctrine which he before had mainteyned, before the whole multitude of the people, whych he reported to be about ỹ numbre of two thousand persons, in the presence of the Maier, officers, and other hys frendes, & there did recant all which he before had taught, confirming the merytes of men, affiaunce of workes, free wyll, place of purgatory, intercession of sainctes, pardons, satisfactions, and finally all thinges whiche he before had confuted by the testimonyes of scripture, affirming wyth open protestatyon, that he dyd

Merites, affyaunce of workes fre wil, purgatory, intercessions of saincte pardons of Bisshops, satysfactyons, &c.

erre, & was deceiued: but nowe was returned to ỹ way of light and truth, and into the bosome of the holy churche of Rome. This done, he was appointed to pay a fyne of .xxx. crounes of the which he paied fyue too the preist that brought hym the copy of his recantation, the other xxv. he gaue out of hande for a receptacle or tabernacle of ỹ sacramente of thaulter. And soo was dimissed of the magistrate & was restored to his wife, children, goodes, and promotyons Anon, this most wretched man and most vnluckye of all other, perceyued the terryble sentence of the righteous God, to lyghten and glyster agaynste hym: and dyd most euydently know that the wrathe of the almyghtye GOD was fallen vpon his

Whosoeuer denieth mee before menne, I wyl also be ashamed of hym.

heade

heades. By and by he lost all the gyftes of the holy ghost, & chryst was seperated from him: Al the benefites of Chryst, al comforte vanished away, his heart was filled wyth hatred, confusyon, cursing, and blasphemy. And immediatly came in hys mynde a heape & remēbraunce of al ỹ iniquities & faultes, from ỹ day of his nativitie. What should I say more? By and by Chryst departed from hym, & the most sweete peace of Christe. And in theyr place came death, Sathan, horroure, feare, confusion, and dyspayre.

Doo not make ỹ holy gost sorowfull.

And thus this wretched person continuing in this most myserable estate, by the space of syxe Moonethes, came at the lengthe (in these latter dayes) wyth hys wyfe, chyldren

He recanted then in Nayre.

and houshoide vntoo Padua, where daily falling in to worse estate & worse, & strickē continually with greater confusiō, sealing also the terrible indignatyon of God against him, fell at ỹ length into vtter desperatyon. And so lay downe in his bed wout any feuer, leasing al the vse of his body, except his speache: neither desiring, nor eatinge any thyng, neyther digestinge ỹ whyche was put intoo hym by force, nor voydinge any thinge, but onely drinkyng, & troubled with an vnsatyable thirste, as though he would haue dronke vp Hister & Nilus. But in coũtenaunce and visage, wel liking in minde and vnderstandynge, moste constante, moste stronge of remembraunce, neuer repeatynge one worde twyse, receyuing

Hister and Nilus bee great riuers

uyng all that came vnto him, & vttering learned, graue, and so hye communicatiõ, that he was condempned by the righteous iudgement of god, that he was all ready in hel, in continual tor ment, that he was voide & desti tute of all hope and fauoure of God, that he ought not to loke for the mercy of god, for that he had sinned against ỹ holy ghost and that his faulte was vnpar donable, ỹ the merites of chryst did auayle hym nothynge, that he had no maner faithe or hope lefte, wysshynge too be in the place of Judas or Caine, that he loked for nothynge else dai lye, but the horryble sentence of the iuste God, and that the mer cy of God, dyd farre surmount all the synnes of the world: but yet coulde not auayle hym any

He denied the knowē truth, for ỹ peace of men.

He knewe hym selfe to be foreknowen.

thynge, for that he was reprobate from the begynnynge: neither wrytten at anye tyme, in ꝓ boke of lyfe, that Christ neither suffered nor prayed for hym: but for the elect only, that the iudgemente of God was declared, and hys iustyce fulfilled in hym onely. Finally, that within shorte space, hys horrible ende should come: that he myght geve an example to all the electe, of his abiuration. When hee had vttred all these thynges, and manye moo most euidently and in perfecte mynde, in the presence of vs that were assembled, aboute thirtie persons in numbre, with the reuerend Lorde Bishoppe Vergerius: the same Vergerius beganne too comforte hym by all meanes.

The principall ende of this matter.

And when I, emonges o-

thers

ther, was about to speake: the Reuerende Vergerius said vn to him. Deare Mayster Fraun-cys, this is that doctor Gribald that in thys vniuercitie of Pa-dua, professeth the lawes: a god ly man and faythfull, who com-meth to see you. Then he in his mother tongue, sayde. *Sia lui il ben venuto, et io il mal trouato.* Then dyd I dyrect my communication to wardes hym, and sayde. Mai-ster Frauncis, this is thillusion and mockyng of the deuill, that euydentlye doth trouble youre mynd. Wherfor wt al your hert turne vnto ỹ blessed god, who is ready to haue mercy vpon you.

You bee welcom: & I il found

Doo you not knowe that the earthe is full of the mercye of god: and that, yf all the synnes of the worlde were in one man: yet could they not be compared

to the smallest sparke of ỹ mer-
cye of god, who said. As oft as
the synner shall mourne, I wyl
remẽbre his iniquities no more
Consyder Peter that denyed
Christe thrise, and that with an
othe, with whom he had lyued
so long familiarly, of whome he
had receiued so many benefites
so many tokens of loue, and yet
notwithstanding, the most mer
cifull god pardoned hym. Con-
sider the thiefe that neuer had
done any good dede, but had be
stowed his hole lyfe in mischief,
how he, through one motion of
his herte, and power of faythe,
was receiued into fauor. Know
ye not that the hand of the lord
is not yet abridged, whose pro-
pertie is to pardon and to haue
mercy? Call vpon hym a lyttle
with your hert, and aske for his
mer

mercye, and I promise you assu
redly, that he is most readye to
haue mercye vpon you, and to
receiue you into fauor, through
Jesus Christe his blessed sonne
Haue a sure cõfidence Maister
Fraunces, and rise, and doubte
ye not at all, god hath alreadye
mercy vpon you, and hath par-
doned you through Christe, all
your offence. Then saide hee, I
do not beleue. And I answered
agayne. Mayster Frauncys, I
haue knowen many by face and
acquaintaunce, that haue bene
both most greuous sinners, and
possessed of the deuill, and in far
worse estate thẽ you are, brought
into extreame desperation, and
yet through the grace of God,
by the exhortatiõ of their faith-
full frendes, haue turned into
hope & fauor, and died in peace

and quietnes, what shoulde let you thē, but that ye may direct the smallest sparke of your hert to so aboundant mercy of god: with an affection of your herte to call vpon him in hope & faith When I had said these, and many other thinges: the reuerend Lord Vergerius toke my tale by thende, and saide, My sweete Master Frauncis, and my moste dere Maister Frauncis, vnderstande the wordes of this Doctor who is both faithfull, and ỹ messenger of God, whome god hath sent vnto you, to ascertain you of his mercye. Why do yee not beleue this: Wyll yee not ỹ god shuld haue mercy vpō you: He wil out of doubt haue mercie vpon you, & pardon all your offence, howe can he denye you any thing, that hath graunted you

you Christe hys blessed sonne? Be of good chere, and lyfte vp youre hearte a litle in hope and truste. Will ye that we saye the lordes prayer together frō the heart? He answered to thys: I beleue all that ye saye: yea the deuyls beleue, & are afraid, but all this auaileth me nothynge. My synne is to deathe. Certes I would gladly attain the mercy and fauor of god: but he wyll notte. All the power of faythe is taken from me. For the lorde had respect vnto Peter: but he hath no respecte vnto mee. He was elect, and I am reprobate. I wyll pray vnto god with my tongue, and wyll quyckely saye whatsoeuer ye wyll haue me to saye. But my herte is full of hatred, cursing & blasphemy. I beleue & fele ẏ god is agaynst me.

He doth allege hys reprobation or refusinge.

And

And as he spake thus, a flie cam flyng before his face: Lo (saide he) now Belzebub calleth me to a feaste. wee shall perceiue myne end tapproche, to the example of many, that the iudgemente and iustice of god, may openly be declared vpon mee. And when he had thus sayde, hee turned hys face awaye from vs, turnynge hymselfe on the other side, then said the reuerende father Vergerius. Ah dere Master Fraun cys, turne your face vnto vs, I woulde we praied to god together, and say, Our father. &c.

Then he turnynge hym, began to say the lordes prayer in hys mothers tongue, with such gra uitie and deuotion, that all wee did wonder: and this vttred, he added theese wordes. I haue said it with my mouthe, but my

herte

herte is cleane frō it, God hath taken all his grace frō me. My heart is vtterly hardened: We laboure in vayn. And when we had spoken with hym, all these wordes, and manye other, wee bade hym farewell. And soo departed all thence w̄ the Lorde Vergerius, to pray vnto God for hym, entendyng to returne on the morow if the blessed god woulde vouchsafe to shew hym his mercye. The nexte daye we came to the wretched man, salutynge hym as the maner is, too whō the reuerend Lord Vergerius saide. Ryghte welbeloued Maister Francys, is it any better w̄ you, by the grace of god: haue ye receiued no comfort in your hert: haue you conceiued any good hope: to whom he answered nothynge at all: but rather

The second daies worke

ther continually wozse & wozse
Then began we to demaunde
hym many questions, and espe-
cially what time he felt fyrst in-
to that confusion and desperati
on, and when that vnquenchea
ble wozme dyd firste begyn too
burne his conscience, then rect-
ted he vnto vs the whole ozdze
and pzocesse of his firste and se-
cond abiuration: as we haue de
clared in the beginning. Which
abiurations made, by and by he
perceyued him selfe to be smit-
ten with the mightye hande of
God, not wyth any affliction oz
infirmitie of the body (which he
righte gladly would haue ac-
knowledged foz ỹ chastisemente
and cozrectyon of sinne, & wold
not vtterli haue cast away hope
and truste): But the most wzet
ched felowe from that houre,
and

and that sodaynlye, perceyued him selfe to bè stricken in heart, spirite and conscyence, for God from that houre, sente into hys heate a gnawing worme, an vnquencheable fyre, that sodenlye he might be fylled with errour, confusion and desperation, whiche worme and fyre, neuer since forsoke him: in somuche that he confessed him selfe to be in farre worse estate, then yf hys soule were deuyded frō hys body, & hee, ẅ Caine and other dampned persons, desyrynge rather to be in the place of anye deade and dampned soule, then so to lyue in hys bodye, & that death shoulde bee muche more welcome too hym.

Then, weepynge he began to declare vntoo vs horryble visions, how ỹ he perceiued since that

that time continually deuils to come to his chaumbre, yea too his bed, makyng a noyse & busynes, puttyng him in feare & shyuering, stickyng pinnes in ỹ pillowe vnder his head, and sayd ỹ he conceiued not these thynges by a false or corrupt imagination, but euẽ as truely as he sawe vs all alyue, and speaking with him.

Then said the reuerend lord Uergerius. Ah, deere Maister Frauncis your spirite vtterlye corrupt, representeth vnto you these erronious illusyons, and false imaginations. But return a while vnto the spirit of truth & direct your hearte with hope and affiaunce vntoo the blessed God, merciful, and ful of goodnes, and without doubt he wyl be good and merciful vnto you

he

he will cast from you all horroz and confusion, haue sure confydence swete maister Frauncis: We all haue good hope of you, through the infinyte mercye of god: and (if it please you) let vs say together from the hearte, ỹ lordes prayer. Then sayd he in Laten, the whole prayer, wyth plentyful teares, so deuoutly & grauely, and with such inward affectyon, as we thought, that al we ỹ stode by, did wepe with him. And when I beheld both the teares, the repentaunce & contrition of the man: I sayde. Master Frauncis, ỹ blessed god be praysed. Now are not these the tokens of vtter refusing or castynge awaye. You mourne, ye call for the fauoure of God wyth earneste desyre. Doo not vtterly despayre of his pardon

and saye not wyth a desperate mynde, that god is against you and that ye beleue, that ye wer reprobate and refused from ỹ begynnynge. For noo man can knowe, as long as he is in this mortall life, whether he be worthy the hatred or loue of God, throughe the ryghteousnes of workes. And when we earnestly exhorted him, that in no case he should fall from all hope and truste, and that euery man that is borne (although he had committed al the sinnes of ỹ whole world) ought yet to haue some hope of the fauor and mercy of god, whose goodnes & mercy is much more plenteous, thẽ mannes vnderstandynge can perceiue: and that yf anye of vs were fallen into suche misery, yet woulde he not despayre of

Eccleſi. ix.

the

the mercy of the high and good God. To the whiche he answered. I knowe all thys, and I beleue that the infinite mercye of God, doth farre surmount all ỹ synnes of the worlde, and that euerye man that beleueth and hath faythe, easelye obtayneth pardon of all the synnes of the worlde. Butte thys hope, thys fayth, is the gyfte of God. And thys one thynge wante I, that I can neyther hope nor beleue of the fauour and mercy of god towardes mee.

Faith is ỹ gift of god

And I woulde God that he woulde graunte me thys one thynge, that I coulde conceiue neuer soo lytle hope and belief of forgeueneſſe and pardon.

Butte thys is euen as possyble as too take the whoole waater of the Sea, in one

spoone, and to drynke it vp at a draught. If Salomō had bene in suche case as I am, and had somewhat knowen those thynges which I proue now by manifeste experience, he would neuer haue vttered that sentence But I doo beleue (and thys I knowe moste assuredly) ye there was neuer anye man that had more manifest experience in his life, of the hatred, wrath and indignation of the righteous god agaynste hym, then I haue.
I woulde I were in the place of anye dampned person. You that are in blessed estate suppose thys an easye thynge too be done, that a synner acknowledgynge hys faulte, may lyfte vp hym selfe to hope and faith towardes GOD, and therefore ye exhort me, forasmuche as

as ye se me repentaunte and sorowfull, that I would conceiue some hope and truste to ryse againe: The healthefull hath no nede of a phisition: and he that is hole, can sone geue counsaile too the sycke. But herein am I tormented: this is my hell, this is my confusion and desperation, that I know all grace to be taken from me, that I feele my heart hardened that I can not beleue nor hope any thing at al of thatonemente and mercy of god. Fewe there be whom tuste Iupiter hath loued. We conforted the miserable estate of this desperate man, by such meanes as wee coulde: and promisynge that we woulde praye to God for hym, badde hym farewell, and departed thence wyth the Reuerend Lorde Vergerius.

Few chosen.

The state of the desperate man.

And thus dothe the wretched man lyue in hys bodye. A certayne strong man there is, that when he intendes to geue hym meate, dothe bynde hys armes and shoulders wyth bondes, be cause he should not resiste with hys handes. And so openynge hys mouthe by force, puttethe thin broth into his mouth with a spoone or other instrumente. And yet doth he let it as muche as he can, stoppynge it with his tongue. But it can not choose, but that some of the broth must nedes fal downe by his gaping into the tawes and palace of his mouthe, and so thence into hys stomake. And thus with much doo is he refreshed twise a day but auoydynge nothynge. But euer he desyreth to dye, and to go to hell wyth all speede: loo-

kinge

kynge euerie houre for the ter-
ryble sentence of GOD: as he
moste euydentelye and openlie
dothe declare by his communi-
cation.

The thyrde daye, came we vn to him, with the Reuerend Father Uergerius, and dyd salute him, as the maner is: and began again to comfort him. Notwithstandyng, he sayd nothyng, but shuttynge hys eyen lyke one aslepe, with paine gaue answere Then came there a certayne aged man, frō the place of Citadel, askynge hym whether hee knewe hym hys frende: whom the wretched man beholdynge a lytle wyth hys eyen, dydde scarse acknowledge. The thirde dayes worke.

Then sayde hee: Mayster Frauncis, I am Anthony Fontanina Priest, whoo was wyth

you, the same day that ye came to Uenice: about. vii. or. viii. mo nethes paste. Then said Fraun=cys with pitifull grone and sigh inges. Alas ỳ cursed daye. Alas that cursed day. I would I had neuer gone thyther, or else had dyed at that present.

Then began we to demaunde hym many questions, especial=ly of his old faith, and whether he had at any tyme, any stedfast or perfite belief: and how he fell so miserablye from that faithe: for asmuch as it was possyble ỳ he that had once perfectlye and firmely beleued, shuld fall from the hole. For it is wrytten: that
Romai. xi. the gy[illegible]es of the holye goste, are with[illegible]e repentaunce. Then answ[illegible]ed he. Certes, I did be=leue that Christe was the Sa=crifice that appeased Goddes wrathe

wrathe towarde vs, and that it was he onely by whome wee dyd attayne saluation and righteousnes, neyther doubted I at any tyme in thys. But I did not reknowledge the benefites of Christ, and (to say the truth) I neuer loued hym again with perfite hearte: But rather toke the faith of the Gospell, too the liberty of the flesshe, and so did abuse that faithe, to vnlefull lycence to synne: and did neglect the whole study, desyre & meane of godlynes and religion.

Christe only iustifieth.

He had not true charitie.

Often erroure.

By and by, turninge hym vnto certain yonge men that stoode by, he sayd. My sonnes, herken to my wordes. I saye not thys for that I woulde plucke anye thynge from the holye Gospel (whythe I knowe to bee moste trewe): but that ye shoulde not

sette soo muche by youre fayth: but that alsoo yee ꝯhoulde doo good wozkes, beleue mee, that haue pzoued it. And then often tymes wyth teares and syghynges, hee didde commende aboue al the Scripture, the wozthye Epystle of Peter, chyefe in dede, of al the Apostles: whiche exhozteth all faythfull chzistyans, too Godlynesse, chastitye, hoolynesse, and cleane lyfe: and too pzepare an vnspotted Temple too GOD.

1. Pet.

But I (sayde hee) wheare as I bothe didde pzesume that I had atteyned perfite fayth, and alsoo boldelye pzeached too other: and had in a readynesse all the places of Scripture, yet lyued wickedlye and vngodly.

And beholde the manyfeste iudgement

iudgement of god, who hath so daynlye taken me in hys anger & fury: not for any amendment, but too perfyte dampnatyon.

Then rose there, vp one that was there presente, a manne excellently learned, and longe exercised in holye Scripture, and saide. Maister Frauncis, we do not altogether alow thys your exhortatyon, whereas ye counsayle vs not soo muche to yelde to the faythe of the Gospel: but that we should also enbrace and commende thafflaunce of woorkes. For wee knowe that there are twoo kyndes of righteousnesse, outwarde, and inwarde. Outwarde righteousnes, whiche is of woorkes, and whyche the worlde dothe commende the same iustyfyeth not before

God

god, neither auaileth to salua-
tion. For Socrates, Cato and
Aristydes, tyght well perfour
med that tyghteousnes: wher-
bye they gate much praise and
glorye in thys worlde. But the
inward righteousnes is of god
whyche doth regenerate vs by
grace into hope, faith, and cha-
ritie: and by thys faithe freelye
graunted vnto vs, doo we lyue
and are iustified: and god impu
teth not oure synnes vntoo vs
without the whyche, neuerthe
lesse, we can not be, as the scrip-
ture sayth: if we say we haue no
synne, we beguile oure selues.
But blessed is he to whom the
lorde imputeth not synne, and
whose synnes are couered.

The righte-
ousnes
which is
in christ
iustyty-
eth.

Wherfore, there is noo cause
that ye should sende vs to out-
warde worckes, as to the ankre

and

and refuge of saluatiō and righ teousnes. Then sayde I: Sir, Maister Frauncis wordes are not to be taken so precisely or exactely, as though he woulde compare the outwarde righte= ousnes of workes, to the fayth of the Gospel, and inward righ teousnes: But he exhorted the yonge men after this sorte: be= cause ỹ most part do wickedlye turne the libertie of the gospel into the vnlefull lybertie of the flesshe, and wythout aduisemēt abuse the gifte of faith, & wher= as they call them selues fayth= full, yet denye fayth in their de= des. Therefore, Peter in his e= pistle (which thys man so much commended, as ye haue heard) and James also, teache almost nothynge else, then that wee shoulde declare oure faythe in

oure outwarde woꝛkes, as S. Peter saythe. Wherefoꝛe bꝛethꝛen, doo as muche as ye can too make your electyon certain by your good woꝛkes. And James allso sayth. Shewe me thy fayth, and I will shewe ỹ myne by my woꝛkes. Therefoꝛe this man blameth hym self greatly foꝛ thys cause, that whereas he pꝛofessed that he had ỹ inward righteousnes, alwayes neglected the outwarde. Then began we earnestly too disputе of the matter, and of the state of thys wꝛecthed man, and dyligently to search, whether his tresPace were moꝛtall oꝛ noo. Foꝛ the whiche, accoꝛding to the saying of Sainct Jhon, we ought not too pꝛaye. And that well learned man began to disPute learnedlye and excellentlye of the synne

The beginning of a disputatiō.

synne agaynste the holye ghost and of resisting after the truth is knowen, and made a playne dystinction (as we thoughte) of all the kindes of sinne, against ȳ holye ghost. And the wretched man herkened to all these thinges with attent eare: to whom the Lorde Vergerius sayde. Welbeloued Mayster Frauncis, when yee heare these thynges disputed so godlye and deuoutly, and the places of scripture (in whyche yee haue excelled) to be brought fourthe, take you in the meane season no comforte and recreatyon with vs. And especiallye, seing that you for youre capacitie, declare the Scriptures so eloquently, wee are not without al hope of your saluation: and suppose that the spirite of god is not cleane take from

from you, to whome he answe-
red. What comfort can happen
to a cursed and dampned man:
yea, whatsoeuer I speake, hear,
see, taste, or fele: all is turned vn
to my confusyon and curse: too
whom the lord Vergerius said
Ah dere maker Frauncis, why
should ye not hope of the good-
nes and mercy of God: Dothe
not the Lord lead downe into
hell, and bringe backe againe:
Consider Dauid the prophete
who beyng brought doune too
hel, and to death: yet praied vn
to God, with gronnng and tea-
res, to graunt him the renuing
of hearte and spiryte. And he
made aunsweare: Dauid was
alwayes elect, and in Gods fa-
uoure, and although he fell gre
uouslye, yet the spirite of God,
neuer departed from hym:
Yea

yea, he prayed vnto god, that he would not caste hym from hys face: and that he wold not take the holye ghost from hym. But I am in farre vnlyke estate, neither elected, nor in Goddes fauour, but haue bene alwaies reprobate and cursed: neither can I pray vnto hym, not to take away ỹ holy spirite frõ me, for he is quite taken awaye alreadye, and neuer shall bee restored. I know that god doth raise vp again, those that are bodily dead and restoreth to lyfe, those that are brought vnto hell: ỹ is, to theyr sepulture: as Christe raised vp Lasarus, & brought him agayne frõ hell. But I that am condempned to eternall death, haue no hope left of bringing again: but so ỹ I could cõceiue neuer so litle hope or truste of the

mercy of God: I woulde moste gladly chose to liue. x. M. yeres and more, in all the paines and tormentes of hell, so ỹ at length I myghte hope for some ende. But I do most firmely beleue, that I shall thus long remaine in life, in all cursing and desperatyon: that the iudgemente of god may be fulfylled in me, and that I may be an example to al the worlde, of gods vengeance and iust indignation, against a reprobate man: Wolde God I were dead, and in the place of any dampned person. Then said I. Maister Fraunces, heare me a litle, I can not vtterly despair of youre saluation. For I dare take it in good part, that ỹ blessed god hath so greuously tormented you in this present life, & hath not reserued youre punishment

nishment to an other worlde: so that I haue som hope, that god wyl haue mercy vpon you. And he made answer: Nay, I know most assuredly my refusing and reprobation, and that he hathe not corrected my sinne with corporal punishment: but rebuking me in hys angre and fury, hath condempned my soule, hert and spirite, with perpetuall hardenes and confusion. Wolde God he had sodainly vexed my body and had left my spirite free.

What shall I saye more? Wee talked with him, til it was night of manye places of Scripture, and of the maruaylous iudgements of god. Emongest other thynges, I demaunded of hym what he thought of the sleping of soules. And he aunswered. Although a certayne Doctour

The place of soules.

of Germanye, supposeth that this is not manyfestlye ynough declared by the scriptures: yet I beleue that the soule of the electe, dothe strayghte waye ascende intoo the place of euerlastynge blysse, and doth not slepe with the buried bodi. Then the Reuerende Lorde Vergerius, takynge hys tale by thende, of thys (sayde he) oughte we in no wyse to doubte. There bee for thys manie places of scripture: as, this day thou shalte be with me in Paradyce: and it is alsoo manifestlye proued by the story of Lazarus, and the riche man: and Paule desired to be deade, that hee myghte bee in heauen wyth Chryste.

At the lengthe, beholdynge the vncurable plague (as mee thoughte) of thys desperate fe-

low

lowe, I was soo bolde too aske hym thys questyon. Mayster Frauncis, I praye you answere me: forasmuche as, through vtter desperatyō, ye say ẏ in thys lyfe yee are worse, then yf yee were wyth the dampned folke in hel: and for as muche as, I se you continuallye to wysshe for deathe, that ye myght go to hel as thoughe nowe, bothe youre bodye and soule weere in more paynefull tormente, as ye do openlye wytnesse. I demaunde of you, yf yee had a swearde in your hande: would ye kyll your selfe (as al desperate personnes for the most part do) that haue stycked them selues wyth weapon, or strangled theym selues by hangyng? Thē said he, geue me a swerd, & ye shall se what I wyll do. Nay (sayd I) I do but

desyre you to shew vs your will
I can not tell (sayde he) neither
can I saye what my wyll then
shoulde bee. And when he had
thus sayd, the reuerend Lorde
Vergerius obtayned of him a-
gaine wyth muche a doo, to say
the lordes prayer. But he sayd
it no more with suche affection
of hearte, as he was wonte too
do. Moreouer, he did protest ꝑ
his hearte was quite from god
& that he called him not father
with his hert, but rather cursed
and blasphemed him, and there
fore he said there was no cause
why we shoulde laboure anye
more in vaine too comforte and
bringe hym home agayne. For
it was euen as possible to bring
hym too anye hope or truste of
the mercye of God, towardes
hym, as it was possible to fil the
whole

hole woꝛlde with one grayne of mill. Then all wee honowꝛyng the wonderfull iudgemente of God, bad him farewel, & departed. And foꝛ almuche as, hys kinsfolke had pꝛouyded a Chariot, and were purposed ỹ nexte daye too conueygh hym from Padua, to the place of Citadel: we gaue theym warnyng in no wyse to foꝛsake hym, but continually should get him the companye of godlye men: that the blessed God (if it were possible) by the contynuall pꝛayer and comfoꝛting of good men, might vouchsafe too graunte him his mercye.

Mill is a small sede.

The nexte daye after, when the wꝛetched man was readye too take his ioꝛney, and hauing hys apparell on, was bꝛoughte from hys bedde, he beheelde all

The foꝛth dayes woꝛke.

the chambre with a fierce & cru-
el countenaunce, & horrible eien
and by chaunce, espyed a wode-
knife lying vpon the table, wh-
che by & by, he snatched to sticke
hym selfe. But hys two sonnes
ỹ were alwayes by hym, tooke
hym sodainly by the hande, and
plucked the knyfe frō him: wher
by we may plainly know, what
we may vndoubtedly thinke of
that demaund whych we asked
hym the day before, of kyllynge
hym: to ỹ which he would make
none answer, hidyng his intent
And this did the reuerend lord
Vergerius signifie vnto me, as
an enterpryse, worthy to be no-
ted, beyng aduertised of ỹ same
by hys forenamed Kynsfolkes.
Thus was this miserable man
conueighed to his house at Ci-
tadel. But howe hee dothe, and
what ende

what ende he hath. I shal by all meanes go about to vnderstande: and beyng aduertised of the truth. I shall by goddes fauor, declare you the whole.

That may ye se in the preface.

Fare ye wel.

From Padua, the. xxvii. of Nouembre. 1548.

These thynges haue wee sene, and sensibly knowen, & haue thoughte good too write them vnto you, to ye praise and glory of ye hygh god, whose kyngdome we earnestlye desyre to be openly knowen to the hole worlde.

There foloweth a godly praier against desperation.

A godly

A Godlye prayer, agaynste desperation.

O Lyuing God, and most merciful father, whiche alone of thy almyghtye power, prouidence and wisdom diddest create heauē and earth, with all thinges therin, in most comely forme and decent ordre: and that of very loue that thou beareſt, chiefly towardes mankynde, whom thou diddeſt not onelye vouchsafe to make after thyne owne symilitude and likenes: but also diddeſt make man Lorde and gouernour ouer all thy other good creatures: Placyng him in the Paradice of all felicitie, forbidding him nothing but onely theating of one fruict amonge many, ẏ this one commaunde-

maundement should be a mean for him, to know his superiour: and to practice hys obedyence towardes hys creatour. But our father Adam, nothynge regardyng thy fatherly loue, nor inestimable benefites, not wayeing the Royall state and felicitie that he was in: did most vnthankefully (nothynge staiyng him self by thy fore admonitiõ) transgresse and wilfully breake thy commaundemente, thereby deiectyng hym selfe cleane out of thy godly fauour: vtterly losyng all his former beatitude & felicitie, making him selfe of the free sonne of god, bond slaue to the deuil: of immortal, and euer to haue liued in all felicitie, mortal and subiect to death and all misery. And alas, not onely casting away himselfe by hys vnfaithful

faythfull disobedyence, but (for that, he hauyng the sentence of death and dampnation laid vpon him, begate vs, as the whole parent of mankind) he, in his offence, most iustlye condempned me, and all his posteritie: Hereby so hainouslye displeased thy Maiestye, & so iustlye procured thy wrath & indignatiō: that all our dedes, all our merites, noo, not all thintercessions & merytes of all ỹ creatures ỹ euer lyued in this worlde, could not ones moue thy righteous iustice to pardon hym, nor our offence committed in hym: But as thy godlye prouidence did frō euermore fore see ỹ miserable fall of man: so did thy mercy, frō euerlastynge, determine to redeme man again: for thou so louedst ỹ world, ỹ (at the time appointed)

thou

thou didſt ſend doune thy only begottē ſonne incarnate, to ſuffre death for mankind: & by hys deathe ones for euer, to make ỹ fre ſacrifice & omniſufficient ſatiſfaction to thy Juſtice, for the ſinnes of ỹ whole world: freely to make iuſt in thy ſight, al ỹ vnfainedly beleue therein. Therfore, for as much as it hath pleaſed the, Oh father, ſo to opē my mind, & darke ſenſes, ỹ I do certainly know, & vndoubtedly beleue al theſe thinges, by the infallible teſtimonye of thy ſacred & holi ſcripture, not only ỹ thou of thy mercy, doſt frely forgeue me thoffence of myne originall ſin, for chriſtes ſake: but alſo my manifold [illegible] ſyns, cōmytted actually againſt thy maieſty: I moſt hūbly beſech ỹ here, beyng proſtrate & louly, ſubmitting me

the throne of thy mercy, alwaies to graunt me thy peace (whi che passeth all vnderstandinge) ỹ whē, or how soeuer the world do rage against me. The solicitie or care of liuing, losse of goodes, or frendes, or any thing visible or inuisible, do moleste and trouble me, ỹ I may euer haue thy peace, rest & quietnes, in my conscience, & to put my whoole trust & affiaunce in ỹ: & so to preserue me frō ỹ subtil perswasiōs & cruell assaultes of Sathan, ỹ whatsoeuer my calamites, my losses, or myne aduersities bee, or how great, hainouse & manifold soeuer my sinnes be: that I neuer fall into any kynd of desperatiō, other of body or soule: But ỹ I may alwaies remēbre & know thy botomeles mercye to surmounte & passe ỹ nombre

and

& grauitie of al mine offences That I maye alwayes truste in thy mercy, ꝙ thou wilt other preserue me frō synne, or of thy mere mercy freely forgeue me al my sinnes, for thy sonne Iesu Christes sake. And ꝙ thou wilt neuer take frō me thy spirit, but euer grant me grace, ꝙ in al my necessityes & troubles, other of body or soule, I may trulye repent my sins, cal vpō ꝙ for help & aide, and ꝙ I maye stedfastly beleue, that ꝙ (like a merciful father, for thy sons sake) wylt fauourably heare me, mercifullye forgeue me, & mightely defend me against all my enemies, & in al my troubles, ꝙ I neuer cōmit nor cōsent, to ꝙ destructiō of my bodye or soule: but euer to lyue here in thy fear & drede, vntyll it shal please ꝙ (of thy mercy) to cal me to raigne with ꝙ in glory euerlasting. Amen.

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by Jhon Oswen.

¶ They be also to sell at
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